

This section provides an overview of the visual character, scenic resources, views, scenic highways, and sources of light and glare that are encountered in the Plan Area and the surrounding area. This section provides an evaluation of the potential impacts to aesthetic resources associated with implementation of the Specific Plan and recommendations for mitigating those impacts. Information in this section is derived primarily from the following:

- California Scenic Highway Mapping System (Caltrans, 2019);
- *City of Fresno General Plan* (City of Fresno, 2014);
- *City of Fresno Master Environmental Impact Report EIR* (City of Fresno, 2014);
- *Fresno General Plan Public Review Draft Program Environmental Impact Report* (City of Fresno, 2020);
- *City of Fresno Municipal Code, Chapter 13 Sidewalks, Streets, Parkways, and Underground Utility Districts Section 13-305 Tree Preservation* (City of Fresno, 2019).

Comments were received during the public review period or scoping meeting for the Notice of Preparation regarding this topic from the following: Cathy Caples (August 1, 2019). The portion of this comment letter which relates to this topic is addressed within this section. Full comments received are included in **Appendix A**.

3.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

PROJECT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The Plan Area is triangular in shape and located west of State Route 99. It is bounded on the south by West Clinton Avenue, and to the west by Grantland and Garfield Avenues. The Plan Area includes the southwest portion of Highway City adjacent to State Route 99. The Plan Area encompasses approximately 7,077 acres (approximately 11 square miles) in the City of Fresno city limits and unincorporated Fresno County. Of the eleven square miles within the Plan Area, 6.9 square miles are in the city limits and 4.1 square miles are in the growth area. The growth area is land outside the city limits but within the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) boundary, which is the adopted limit for future growth.

The Plan Area is relatively flat with natural gentle slope near State Route 99. The Plan Area topography ranges in elevation from approximately 283 to 315 feet above mean sea level. A large amount of land in the Plan Area is farmland or rural residential lots with large, uneven, and underutilized parcels.

The Plan Area has approximately eight different existing land uses which include the following:

- **Rural/Estate Residential:** Approximately 27 percent, or 1,911 acres, of the existing land uses within the Plan Area are currently used as rural/estate residential. Of the 6,109 acres of developable lands within the Plan Area, 1,640.68 acres are low-density single-family homes that are occupied lots with a size of two to nine acres per dwelling units.
- **Multiple Family Residential:** Approximately two percent, or 141 acres, of the Plan Area account for multi-family residential development. These uses are primarily located adjacent

to arterial roads with easy access to State Route 99, and Fresno Area Express (FAX) service lines.

- **Single-Family Residential:** Approximately 21 percent of the existing uses within the Plan Area are currently developed with single-family residential uses. These uses are located primarily within the city limits.
- **Vacant Land:** Approximately 15 percent of the land in the Plan Area, or 911.34 acres, account for vacant lands. Vacant areas are located throughout the Plan Area, in both the city limits and SOI. Vacant areas represent infill opportunities within the Plan Area's densest neighborhoods.
- **Public/Government Facilities:** Approximately six percent, or 337.83 acres, of land within the Plan Area contain public or government facilities. These land uses include Central Unified School District facilities, churches, the Dante Club, and the Hacienda facility.
- **Open Space/Agricultural Land:** Approximately 25 percent or 1,554.06 acres, in the Plan Area contain open space or agricultural land. While there are some open space land uses within the City, most of these uses are primarily located in the SOI. These uses include parks and ponding basins.
- **Industrial Uses:** Approximately one percent, or 57.33 acres, of the Plan Area account for industrial uses. The largest industrial land use in the Plan Area contains an agricultural business located at the intersection of West Dakota Avenue and North Grantland Avenue.
- **Commercial Uses:** Approximately three percent, or 219.76 acres, of the Plan Area account for commercial uses. Commercial uses are spread throughout the eastern and southeastern portions of the Plan Area, closer to State Route 99.

Surrounding land uses include State Route 99; the historic communities of Herndon and Highway City; incorporated areas of the City of Fresno to the north; incorporated areas of the City of Fresno to the east (including mostly industrial uses); unincorporated Fresno County and incorporated areas of the City of Fresno to the south (including farmland uses, rural residential uses, low density residential uses, and underutilized parcels); and unincorporated Fresno County to the west (including farmland and rural residential uses).

REGIONAL SCENIC RESOURCES

Visual resources are generally classified into two categories: scenic views and scenic resources. Scenic views are elements of the broader viewshed such as mountain ranges, valleys, and ridgelines. They are usually mid-ground or background elements of a viewshed that can be seen from a range of viewpoints, often along a roadway or other corridor. Scenic resources are specific features of a viewing area (or viewshed) such as trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings. They are specific features that act as the focal point of a viewshed and are usually foreground elements.

Features of the built environment that may also have visual significance include individual or groups of structures that are distinctive due to their aesthetic, historical, social, or cultural significance or characteristics. Examples of the visually significant built environment may include bridges or overpasses, architecturally appealing buildings or groups of buildings, landscaped freeways, and a location where a historic event occurred. Aesthetically significant features occur in a diverse array

of environments within the region, ranging in character from urban centers to rural agricultural lands to natural water bodies.

SCENIC HIGHWAYS AND CORRIDORS

Scenic highways and corridors make major contributions to the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of a region. The development of community pride, the enhancement of property values, and the protection of aesthetically-pleasing open spaces reflecting a preference for the local lifestyle are all ways in which scenic corridors are valuable to residents.

Scenic highways and corridors can also strengthen the tourist industry. For many visitors, highway corridors will provide their only experience of the region. Enhancement and protection of these corridors ensures that the tourist experience continues to be a positive one and, consequently, provides support for the tourist-related activities of the region's economy.

Scenic Highways

A scenic highway is generally defined by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) as a public highway that traverses an area of outstanding scenic quality, containing striking views, flora, geology, or other unique natural attributes. A highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view.

There are no officially Designated Scenic Highways in Fresno County. Fresno County has four eligible State Scenic Highways, and the nearest eligible highways are east of the Plan Area along State Route 33 (approximately 27 miles west of the Plan Area), along State Route 168 east of the City of Clovis (approximately 19 miles east of the Plan Area), along State Route 180 (approximately 67 miles east of the Plan Area), and along State Route 198 (approximately 37 miles south of the Plan Area). The Plan Area is not visible from any of these eligible State Scenic Highways.

Scenic Corridors

A scenic corridor is the view from the road that may include a distant panorama and/or the immediate roadside area. A scenic corridor encompasses the outstanding natural features and landscapes that are considered scenic. It is the visual quality of the man-made or natural environments within a scenic corridor that are responsible for its scenic value. Commonly, the physical limits of a scenic corridor are broken down into foreground views (zero to one quarter mile) and distant views (over one quarter mile). In addition to distinct foreground and distant views, the visual quality of a scenic corridor is defined by special features, which include:

- Focal points - prominent natural or man-made features which immediately catch the eye.
- Transition areas - locations where the visual environment changes dramatically.
- Gateways - locations which mark the entrance to a community or geographic area.

The Fresno General Plan designates the following roadway segments as scenic corridors:

- Van Ness Boulevard – Weldon to Shaw Avenues

3.1 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

- Van Ness Extension - Shaw Avenue to the San Joaquin River Bluff
- Kearney Boulevard - Fresno Street to Polk Avenue
- Van Ness/Fulton couplet - Weldon Avenue to Divisadero
- Butler Avenue - Peach to Fowler Avenues
- Minnewawa Avenue - Belmont Avenue to Central Canal
- Huntington Boulevard - First Street to Cedar Avenue

The nearest scenic corridor to the Plan Area is Van Ness Boulevard, located approximately 5.34 miles east of the Plan Area. However, the Plan Area is not visible from Van Ness Boulevard or any of the above designated scenic corridors.

LIGHT AND GLARE

There are two typical types of light intrusion. First, light emanates from the interior of structures and passes out through windows. Secondly, light projects from exterior sources such as street lighting, security lighting, balcony lighting, and landscape lighting. “Light spill” is typically defined as the presence of unwanted and/or misdirected light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated.

Glare is the sensation produced by luminance within the visual field that is significantly greater than the luminance to which the eyes are adapted, which causes annoyance, discomfort, or loss in visual performance and visibility.

The majority of the Plan Area is urbanized, with significant sources of light and glare, such as streetlights, parking lots, interior lights from buildings, lighted recreational facilities, and light emitted from residential and non-residential buildings throughout the Plan Area. Substantial lighting currently exists in the more developed portions of the Plan Area along SR 99 and the eastern portion of the Plan Area. Limited lighting currently exists in rural residential and agricultural areas that are located within the western and southwestern portions of the Plan Area. Buildings and structures made with glass, metal, and polished exterior or roofing materials exist throughout the Plan Area. These surfaces, as well as the natural and manmade light sources, could result in localized glare.

3.1.2 REGULATORY SETTING

There are a number of regulatory agencies whose responsibility includes the oversight of the aesthetic resources of the state including the California Department of Transportation, Scenic Highway Program, and the California Energy Commission. These agencies are often responsible for preserving the economic, social and scenic values of aesthetic resources such as the California Highway System and combating light pollution of the night sky. The following is an overview of the State and local regulations that are applicable to the proposed Specific Plan.

STATE

California Scenic Highway Program

The intent of the California Scenic Highway Program is “to protect and enhance California’s natural scenic beauty and to protect the social and economic values provided by the State’s scenic resources.” Caltrans administers the program, which was established in 1963 and is governed by the California Streets and Highways Code (§260 et seq.). The goal of the program is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of the adjacent land. Caltrans has compiled a list of state highways that are designated as scenic and county highways that are eligible for designation as scenic.

Scenic highway designation can provide several types of benefits to the region. Scenic areas are protected from encroachment of inappropriate land uses, free of billboards, and are generally required to maintain existing contours and preserve important vegetative features. Only low-density development is allowed on steep slopes and along ridgelines on scenic highways, and noise setbacks are required for residential development.

Nighttime Sky – Title 24 Outdoor Lighting Standards

The California legislature passed a bill in 2001 requiring the California Energy Commission (CEC) to adopt energy efficiency standards for outdoor lighting for both the public and private sectors. In addition to improved energy efficiency standards, Title 24 standards regulate lighting characteristics such as maximum power and brightness, shielding, and sensor controls to turn lighting on and off. Different lighting standards are set by classifying areas by lighting zone. The classification is based on population figures of the 2010 Census. Areas can be designated as LZ1 (dark), LZ2 (rural), or LZ3 (urban). Lighting requirements for dark and rural areas are stricter in order to protect the areas from new sources of light pollution and light trespass.

LOCAL

Fresno General Plan

The City of Fresno General Plan contains the following objectives and policies that are relevant to aesthetics and visual resources:

URBAN FORM, LAND USE, AND DESIGN ELEMENT

Objective D-1: Provide and maintain an urban image that creates a “sense of place” throughout Fresno.

Policy D-1-a: Direct Access to Units. Require all new multi-family residential development along BRT and other transit or pedestrian-oriented streets (Collector and Local), including high-rise, townhomes or other units, to provide direct pedestrian street access and to promote walkable connectivity, individualization, family-friendly development, identity, and street safety to the maximum extent reasonably feasible.

Policy D-1-b: Active Ground Floor Frontage. Encourage all new development located within Activity Centers and/or along BRT corridors to incorporate active ground floor frontages that engage pedestrians to the maximum extent feasible. Establish pedestrian-oriented design standards in the Development Code for building frontages, transparency, fenestration, and entries to create active streetscapes.

Policy D-1-c: Privately Owned Public Spaces. Consider creating and adopting design standards and incentives for providing privately owned public open spaces and plazas for gathering to enhance the pedestrian realm and provide opportunities for social interaction.

Policy D-1-d: Public Art. Continue to promote a citywide public art program that contributes to an awareness of the City's history and culture.

Policy D-1-e: Graphic Identity. Continue the preservation, promotion, procurement and strategic location of landmarks, monuments and artwork that provide orientation and represent Fresno's cultural heritage and artistic values.

Policy D-1-f: Update Street Signs. Consider updating street sign regulations to create a way-finding system and graphic identity without dominating city and district appearance.

Policy D-1-g: Reducing Surface Parking. Consider adopting and implementing incentives to replace existing large surface parking lots in centers with parking structures, and to incorporate them into high-density mixed use developments.

Policy D-1-h: Screening of Parking. Consider requiring all new development with parking in Activity Centers and along corridors to be screened or concealed. Locate principal pedestrian entrances to new nonresidential buildings on the sidewalk; any entrances from parking areas should be incidental or emergency use only.

Policy D-1-i: Wrapping Parking Structures. Consider requiring new development of above-grade parking structures to be wrapped with and provide direct access to active uses, such as dwelling units, offices, and shopping spaces.

Policy D-1-j: Lighting Standards. Update lighting standards to reflect best practices and protect adjoining uses from glare and spillover light.

Objective D-2: Enhance the visual image of all "gateway" routes entering the Fresno Planning Area.

Policy D-2-a: Design Requirements for Gateways. Create unified design requirements for gateways to welcome travelers to the City's Activity Centers.

Policy D-2-b: Funding for Gateway Enhancements. Pursue funding to implement gateway enhancement plans and programs.

Policy D-2-c: Highway Beautification. Work with Caltrans, the Fresno Council of Governments, Tree Fresno, neighboring jurisdictions, and other organizations to obtain funding for highway beautification programs.

Objective D-3: Create unified plans for Green Streets, using distinctive features reflecting Fresno's landscape heritage.

Policy D-3-a: Green Street Tree Planting. Create a Green Street Tree Planting Program, with a well-balanced variety and spacing of trees to establish continuous shading and visual continuity for each streetscape. Strive to achieve coherent linkages between public and private spaces, prioritizing tree planting along tree-deficient Arterial Roadways in neighborhoods characterized by lower per capita rates of vehicle ownership.

Policy D-3-b: Funding for Green Street Tree Planting Program. Pursue funding for the Green Street Tree Planting Program, including landscaping of median islands.

Policy D-3-c: Local Streets as Urban Parkways. Develop local streets as "urban parkways," where appropriate, with landscaping and pedestrian space.

Policy D-3-d: Undergrounding Utilities. Partner with utility companies to continue to pursue the undergrounding of overhead utilities as feasible.

Objective D-4: Preserve and strengthen Fresno's overall image through design review and create a safe, walkable and attractive urban environment for the current and future generations of residents.

Policy D-4-a: Design Review for Large Buildings. Consider adopting and implementing a streamlined design review process for new construction and visible exterior alterations of large and significant multi-family, mixed-use and non-residential development.

Policy D-4-b: Incentives for Pedestrian-Oriented Anchor Retail. Consider adopting and implementing incentives for new pedestrian-friendly anchor retail at intersections within Activity Centers and along corridors to attract retail clientele and maximize foot traffic.

Policy D-4-c: Appropriate Day and Night Activity. Promote new residential, commercial and related forms of development that foster both day and appropriate night time activity; visual presence on the street level; appropriate lighting; and minimally obstructed view areas.

Policy D-4-d: Design for Safety. Continue to involve the City's Police Department in the development review process to ensure new buildings are designed with security and safety in mind.

Policy D-4-e: Flexibility through Overlay Districts. Allow innovative lot designs and patterns to enhance community livability in residential neighborhoods through new zoning provisions, with flexible development standards.

Policy D-4-f: Design Compatibility with Residential Uses. Strive to ensure that all new non-residential land uses are developed and maintained in a manner complementary to and compatible with adjacent residential land uses, to minimize interface problems with the surrounding environment and to be compatible with public facilities and service.

3.1 AESTHETICS AND VISUAL RESOURCES

Policy D-4-g: Development Code Update for Design Concepts. Ensure that standards in the Development Code implement General Plan design concepts for each land use type.

Policy D-4-h: Metal Buildings. Promote the establishment of standards and guidelines for metal buildings to be acceptable and economical forms of structures.

- New buildings with metal walls or metal roofs shall be painted or have other appropriate finishes, as approved by the City; and
- Mechanical equipment shall be screened with parapet walls, mechanical wells, or other means. Roof vent color must match that of the roof. The distinctive pattern of ribs and joints in standing seam and other metal roofing materials should coordinate dimensionally with similar elements in exterior walls.

Objective D-6: Encourage design that celebrates and supports the cultural and ethnic diversity of Fresno.

Policy D-6-a: Consult with neighboring populations, including non-English speaking groups, to inform the architecture, landscape, programming, and interior design of City-owned facilities such as parks, offices, street lighting, and other visible features.

Policy D-6-b: Consider adopting and implementing incentives for, and support efforts by, private development to incorporate culturally-specific architectural elements in areas with a predominant ethnic population.

Objective D-7: Continue applying local urban form, land use, and design policies to specific neighborhoods and locations.

Policy D-7-b: Consider preparing new community, neighborhood, and/or Specific Plans for neighborhoods and locations that were covered by repealed plans.

MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT

Objective MT-3: Identify, promote and preserve scenic or aesthetically unique corridors by application of appropriate policies and regulations

Policy MT-3-b: Preserve street trees lining designated scenic corridors or boulevards. Replace trees of the predominant type and in a comparable pattern to existing plantings if there is no detriment to public safety..

Fresno Outdoor Lighting and Illumination Ordinance

The City's Zoning Ordinance contains Article 20, General Site Regulations, which provides standards for outdoor lighting in an effort to minimize light pollution, glare, and light trespass caused by inappropriate or misaligned light fixtures, while improving nighttime public safety, utility, security, and preserving the night sky as a natural resource and thus facilitating people's enjoyment of stargazing.

Fresno Tree Preservation Ordinance

The City's Zoning Ordinance contains Article 3.5, Street Trees and Parkways, which contains policies regarding the preservation of trees within city limits. The Ordinance requires the City to plant, maintain, protect, preserve, and to regulate the planting, maintaining, protecting and preserving of public trees and landscaping; to eliminate dangerous conditions caused by trees and shrubs that may result in injuries to persons or property; to protect all trees within the City against the spread of disease or pests, and to provide for the special protection of heritage and landmark trees within the city limits. This portion of Fresno's Municipal Code implements a comprehensive permitting process for new and existing development and property owners and provides feasible alternatives and options to tree removal where practicable.

3.1.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Consistent with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the Specific Plan will have significant impact on aesthetics if it would:

- Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;
- In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality;
- Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.1-1: Specific Plan implementation would not result in substantial adverse effects on scenic vistas. (No Impact)

No part of Plan Area is designated as a scenic vista by the City of Fresno General Plan, nor does the Plan Area contain any unique or distinguishing features that would qualify it for designation as a scenic vista.

The Plan Area is partially visible from State Route 99. Because the topography of the Plan Area is relatively flat and SR 99 is at a similar elevation as the surrounding area, views from SR 99 are primarily limited to the more developed and urbanized portions of the Plan Area. More specifically, views from SR 99 primarily consist of uses located immediately adjacent to the freeway. As the Plan Area is not identified as having scenic vistas and expansive views across the Plan Area are limited due to intervening structures and the relatively flat and consistent topography of the area, ***no impact*** would occur to scenic vistas.

Impact 3.1-2: Project implementation would not substantially damage scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway. (No Impact)

There are no designated State Scenic Highways within or in the vicinity of the Project area. There are no highways in Fresno County listed as a Designated Scenic Highway by the Caltrans Scenic Highway Mapping System. Fresno County has three eligible State Scenic Highways; the nearest eligible highways are located east of the Planning Area along State Route 180 (approximately 7 miles east of the Planning Area) and along State Route 168 east of the City of Clovis (approximately 5 miles east of the Planning Area). The nearest designated State Scenic Highway is located within the County of Madera, more than 30 miles northeast of the Planning Area. Thus, ***no impact*** to scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway would occur with implementation of the Project.

Impact 3.1-3: Specific Plan implementation would result in substantial adverse effects or degradation of visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings. (Significant and Unavoidable)

Future development of the Plan Area with new and/or more intense development of residential, commercial, employment, mixed use, open space, and public facility uses would substantially change the visual character of individual sites and the Plan Area.

Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would change the existing visual character of the Plan Area from a relatively undeveloped area to a primarily urbanized area. Impacts related to a change in visual character are largely subjective and very difficult to quantify. People have different reactions to the visual quality of a project or a project feature, and what is considered “attractive” to one viewer may be considered “unattractive” to other viewers.

The western half of the Plan Area is generally more rural and less developed while more developed portions of the Plan Area are along SR 99 and the southeastern portion of the Plan Area. The proposed Plan would result in the conversion of undeveloped land to urban uses, which may contribute to changes in the regional landscape and visual character of the area. In order to reduce visual impacts, development within the Plan Area is required to be consistent with the General Plan, Fresno Zoning Ordinance, and the proposed Specific Plan, which includes development standards in order to ensure quality and cohesive design. These standards include specifications for building height, massing, and orientation; exterior lighting standards and specifications; and landscaping standards. Implementation of the design standards would ensure quality design throughout the Plan Area, and result in development that would be internally cohesive while maintaining an aesthetic quality similar to surrounding uses. Thus, development of an existing developed or urbanized site would not conflict with zoning or other regulations governing scenic quality. In addition, a majority of the parcels identified for change are already planned for development in the existing General Plan or contain existing urbanized land uses.

In addition to future development anticipated within the existing City Limits, the Specific Plan anticipates future development in areas outside the existing City limits, but within the City’s SOI. These areas are primarily rural and agricultural lands. Thus, development of these areas with more urbanized uses would alter the visual character of the area from its current conditions. However, as

noted above, development within these areas would be in compliance with the City's General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, along with the development standards and guidelines established by the Specific Plan to ensure compatible development and cohesive development that considers the visual character of the specific site and surrounding uses. Further, the Specific Plan anticipates less urbanized development within the outer portions of the Plan Area and approximately 250 acres of park, recreational, and open space uses which will provide visual relief within the Plan Area. The proposed Specific Plan would also include visual components that would assist in enhancing the appearance of the Plan Area following site development. These improvements may include landscaping improvements such as new street trees, open lawn area and other vegetation landscaping associated with residential and non-residential development. Although compliance with development regulations and guidelines would improve the aesthetic character of the area associated with more urbanized development, existing views provided to the public of vast open space lands would be replaced with more urbanized development. Additionally, public views of expansive rural and agricultural lands that occur to the west of the Plan Area would be limited within the Plan Area due to intervening development conditions. Thus, impacts to visual character are considered significant and unavoidable.

Various temporary visual impacts could occur as a result of construction activities as the Plan Area develops, including grading, equipment and material storage, and staging. Some of these impacts could last for several weeks or months during any single construction phase. The loss of existing landscaping and trees would also be a temporary impact until new landscaping matures. However, these construction-related impacts would be temporary and viewer sensitivity in the majority of cases would be slight to moderate. Thus, construction impacts would be less than significant.

The proposed Specific Plan includes goals policies that would reduce impacts to visual and aesthetic resources. Specifically, Infrastructure & Public Realm (IPR) Goal 2 includes policies that are intended to improve streetscapes within the Specific Plan Area and contribute to the community's safety and quality of life. Land Use & Housing (LUH) Goal 1 includes policies that promote the orderly development of the Specific Plan Area and LUH Goal 2 includes policies that promote retention of agricultural uses and agritourism within the West Area.

Overall, the loss of the visual appearance of the existing vacant and open space land in the Plan Area will change the visual character of the area in perpetuity. Compliance with the City's General Plan and Municipal Code, and implementation of the proposed Specific Plan's development regulations would reduce visual impacts to the greatest extent feasible; however, the proposed Plan would permanently convert undeveloped rural, agricultural, and open space areas to urbanized uses. This is considered a **significant and unavoidable** impact. There is no feasible mitigation available that would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

Impact 3.1-4: Specific Plan implementation has the potential to result in light and glare impacts. (Less than Significant with Mitigation)

Implementation of the proposed Specific Plan would introduce new sources of light and glare into the Plan Area. However, there are no specific features within the proposed Plan that would create

unusual light and glare. Implementation of existing Outdoor Lighting and Illumination Ordinance and the General Plan policies, such as Policies D-4-c, D-1-j, addressing light and glare may also ensure that no unusual daytime glare or nighttime lighting is produced.

LIGHT IMPACTS

Many areas within the Plan Area are currently exposed to a nominal amount of light due to the rural and agricultural setting. The western half of the Plan Area is generally more rural and less developed, and therefore uses within those areas are exposed to less artificial light from urbanized uses. Other areas within the Plan Area are exposed to substantial lighting, such as the more developed portions of the Plan Area along SR 99 and the southeastern portion of the Plan Area.

Increases in lighting and the introduction of new light sources would occur with new development in the Plan Area. Development within the Plan Area will include new roads, some of which will include lighting systems along the rights-of-way. Residential development will include interior and exterior light sources. Non-residential development will include lighting systems for parking areas, building, and signs, including security lighting. Some park and recreation facilities may include sports lighting to illuminate play areas for evening activities. Other public facility uses, such as schools and fire stations, will also involve lighting for parking, buildings, and security. Additionally, with the increase in development in the Plan Area, there will be increases in nighttime traffic that will increase lighting from car headlights. Although lighting would be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, for the purposes of this analysis, it has been conservatively assumed that exterior lighting would be located throughout most of the outdoor areas of the Plan Area. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, street lighting in the residential areas; exterior lighting on the buildings; courtyard lighting; and parking lot lighting.

The introduction of new light sources and intensification of lighting within the Plan Area would be most notable in areas that are not currently developed or have minimal development within the western and southern portions of the Plan Area. Development in the westernmost portion of the Plan Area could result in lighting within the Plan Area being visible from uses adjacent to and outside of the Plan Area. The City's Outdoor Lighting and Illumination Ordinance would reduce the impact of lighting impacts onto adjacent properties. However, although direct impacts associated with new lighting would be reduced with compliance with General Plan policies and adherence to the City's Outdoor Lighting and Illumination Ordinance, the overall increase in lighting that would occur within the area would create a new source of substantial light which could adversely affect nighttime views in the area, specifically the nighttime sky.

GLARE IMPACTS

Development in accordance with the Specific Plan will increase the amount of structures that could create new sources of glare within the Planning Area and directly adjacent to the Planning Area. These new sources of glare could be from materials used on building facades, parking lots, signs, and motor vehicles. Within the City limits, there are currently many sources of glare, and future development will add to the existing sources. Within the rural and agricultural areas, there are

limited sources of glare. The primary sources of glare that will be added within the Planning Area will occur from vertical structures such as building facades. Parking lots, roadway surfaces and motor vehicles do not create substantial amount of glare. Due to the substantial amount of new building square footage planned for the Plan Area, new buildings may have the potential, to result in a substantial increase in glare. This increase could result in a potentially significant glare impact. However, glare impacts would be reduced with compliance of General Plan policies, design review, municipal code requirements, and implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.1-1 that will require reflective building materials, visible from sensitive receptors, be prohibited from future project sites within the Plan Area.

CONCLUSION

There is the potential for reflective building materials and windows to result in increases in daytime glare within the Plan Area. The use of reflective building materials, including polished steel and reflective glass, could increase daytime glare for sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the project area. However, Mitigation Measure 3.1-1 would ensure that the potential for glare from proposed project buildings and structures would be minimized. With implementation of this mitigation measure, this is considered ***less than significant*** impact.

Light sources from the proposed development may have a significant adverse impact on the surrounding areas, by introducing nuisance light into the area and decreasing the visibility of nighttime skies. Additionally, on-site light sources may create light spillover impacts on surrounding land uses in the absence of mitigation. However, the proposed project will be required to comply with the City of Fresno outdoor lighting and illumination standards and specifications, and would be required to incorporate design features to minimize the effects of light and glare. However, without a detailed lighting plan, increase of nighttime lighting is a potentially significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 3.1-2 would reduce potential impacts associated with nighttime lighting and light spillage onto adjacent properties to a ***less than significant*** level.

MITIGATION MEASURE(S)

Mitigation Measure 3.1-1: *In order to reduce the potential for glare from buildings and structures within the project area, the Preliminary and Final Design Review plan(s) for all future projects in the Plan Area shall show that the use of reflective building materials that have the potential to result in glare that would be visible from sensitive receptors located in the vicinity of the project sites shall be prohibited. The City of Fresno Planning and Development Department shall ensure that the approved project uses appropriate building materials with low reflectivity to minimize potential glare nuisance to off-site receptors. These requirements shall be included in future project improvement plans, subject to review and approval by the City of Fresno.*

Mitigation Measure 3.1-2: *A lighting plan for all future projects in the Plan Area subject to section 15-2508 and section 15-2015 of the City of Fresno Municipal Code shall be prepared prior to the approval of the design review for each project site. The lighting plan shall demonstrate that the lighting systems and other exterior lighting throughout the project area have been designed to minimize light spillage onto adjacent properties to the greatest extent feasible, consistent with*

section 15-2508. – Lighting and Glare and section 15-2015 – Outdoor Lighting and Illumination of the City of Fresno Municipal Code. Use of LED lighting or other proven energy efficient lighting shall be required for facilities to be dedicated to the City of Fresno for maintenance. These requirements shall be included in future project improvement plans, subject to review and approval by the City of Fresno.